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Magick 9

Astral Projection

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Astral projection (OOBE, out of the body experience) is a popular area of occult literature; for traveling to see other worlds and places while the physical body sleeps or is entranced is an exciting notion. Astral projection is not dangerous. It is as safe as sleeping. Most dreams are probably unconscious astral projections, anyway. Although there has been quite a bit written on the subject, astral projection is difficult for many people. The main difficulty is the tendency to forget dream consciousness upon awakening. Accordingly, the successful practice of astral projection requires work.

Modern psychology discounts the idea of actual OOBE (that the spirit temporarily vacates the physical body). However, the idea is very ancient. The Tibetans have an entire system of yoga (dream yoga) based upon astral projection. And here we have an important assumption: you are involved in an OOBE (at least to a degree) whenever you dream. What sets it apart from a full OOBE is your hazy consciousness during the experience and poor recall afterwards. Many people forget most of their dreams completely. Learning astral projection requires a kind of inner mental clarity and alertness.

Dreams are a door to the subconscious which can be used for psychological and spiritual insight, and sometimes for precognition. Dream content is influenced by external sounds and sensations. For example, a loud external noise (such as a train) will likely appear in your dream (if it doesn't wake you up!). Dreams are also influenced by events of the previous day, by your moods, and by suggestion. Everyone normally dreams 4 or 5 times a night (about every 2 hours). The longest dreams occur in the morning. Everyone dreams. You are more likely to remember the details of your dream when you first wake up. By keeping a dream diary you will improve dream recall. Have writing equipment or a tape recorder at your bedside for this purpose; also a light which isn't too bright. Suggest to yourself several times before you go to sleep, "I will awaken with the knowledge of a dream." Then when you do awaken, move quietly (sometimes just turning over drives the idea away). Remember first, then write the dream down, and then add as many details as possible. The next day check for objective facts and expand if you can (by remembering 'what happened before that'). Once you start remembering your dreams in this way, it will become easier to do so. (If

you are unsuccessful at this, and *really* want to remember your dreams, you could arrange for someone to sit by your bedside all night long with a dim light on. Then when he sees your eyes moving back and forth - rapid eye movements, a sign you are dreaming - he can wake you and ask for a dream report.)

Forms Of Astral Projection

Astral projection may be subdivided into three basic types: mental projection, astral projection (proper) and etheric projection. And your OOBE may shift between them. Mental projection is really simple clairvoyance ('remote viewing'), and 'traveling in your mind'. Imagination plays a key role. The experience of mental projection is not particularly vivid, and you will more likely be an observer than a participant. Nevertheless, mental projection is an important 'way in' to astral projection proper.

During mental projection and astral projection you are able to travel through solid objects, but are not able to act directly upon them or to move them (if they are in the physical world). This is not true during etheric projection. Whether it is simply subconscious expectation, or whether it is a true etheric projection which in theory means that part of your physical body has been relocated with your projection (the etheric or vital part) may be difficult to determine. Etheric projections generally travel at or very near the physical world. There are even cases reported (very, very rare ones) in which the entire physical body is transferred to another location (teleportation), or cases in which the physical body exists and acts in two separate places at once (bilocation)!

But our primary interest is astral projection proper, and mental projection to a lesser extent. Astral and mental projection are not confined to the physical world. Travel in the mental and astral realms is feasible, and often preferred. Nor are astral and mental projection restricted to the realm of the earth (you could even go to the moon and planets).

States Of Consciousness

The electrical activity of the brain has been observed and classified with EEG (electroencephalograph) equipment; signals picked up from the scalp by electrodes, then filtered and amplified, drive a graph recorder. Brain activity has been found to produce specific ranges for certain basic states of consciousness, as indicated in 'hz' (hertz, or cycles/vibrations per second):

- delta - 0.2 to 3.5 hz (deep sleep, trance state),
- theta - 3.5 to 7.5 hz (day dreaming, memory),
- alpha - 7.5 to 13 hz (tranquillity, heightened awareness, meditation),
- beta - 13 to 28 hz (tension, 'normal' consciousness).

As you can see, some form of physical relaxation is implied in the alpha, theta, and delta consciousness. These states are in fact reached through deep breathing, hypnosis, and other relaxation techniques. OOBE occurs during these states, and delta is probably the most important for it. The problem is really, as we have said, one of maintaining mental awareness and alertness while experiencing these altered states. Experimental subjects hooked to an EEG do not show a discrete change from drowsy to sleep; it is very gradual.

At the threshold between sleep and waking consciousness is a drowsy condition known as the hypnogogic state. OOBE seems to occur during this state, or a variant of it. By careful control of the hypnogogic state (not going beyond it) it is possible to enter OOBE directly.

Basic Techniques

Most methods of astral projection are methods of conditioning. Some form of trance or altered consciousness is always involved. No one ever projects consciously while fully awake (some may think that they do). Although there are many techniques used to produce an astral projection, they boil down to ten of them. They all sort of overlap.

1. Diet - Certain dietary practices may aid in OOBE, especially at first. These include fasting, vegetarianism, and in general the eating of 'light' foods as discussed in a previous lesson. Carrots and raw eggs are thought to be

especially beneficial, but all nuts are to be avoided. Over-eating should be avoided. And no food should be eaten just before an OOBE attempt. If you intend to practice during sleep, for example, allow 2 to 4 hours of no food or drink (except water) before bedtime. In general, we see here the same kind of dietary restrictions advocated for kundalini yoga.

2. Progressive muscular relaxation - This is one of the basic methods used in hypnosis and self-hypnosis. Physical relaxation can assist one in attaining the requisite trance state. These techniques involve beginning at the toes and tensing, then relaxing the muscles, progressively up the entire body.
3. Yoga and breath - Yoga, mantra, and breathing exercises similarly aim at physical relaxation. The practice of kundalini yoga is particularly relevant, since it is concerned with altered consciousness. In fact the arousal of kundalini requires a similar state of consciousness to OOBE.
4. Visualization - This involves a type of extended clairvoyance or picturing of remote surroundings. If you can experience the feeling of being there, so much the better. Although this technique is essentially mental projection, it is possible to deepen mental projection into astral projection through (you guessed it!) visualization. Crowley taught a similar technique: a) visualize a closed door on a blank wall, b) imagine a meditation symbol on the door, c) visualize the door opening and yourself entering through it. And J.H. Brennan describes similar techniques wherein the door is shaped and colored like a tattva, or alternately, a chosen tarot card is visualized and the student visualizes entering into it.
5. Guided imagery - In many respects similar to visualization. Except in this case, there is a guide (or perhaps a voice on tape) directing you by means of descriptions. As with visualization, mental rather than astral projection is most likely.
6. Body of Light - The old Golden Dawn technique. Imagine a duplicate (mirror image) of yourself in front of you. Then transfer your consciousness and sensation to the duplicate ('body of light').
7. Strong willing - Sort of like creative visualization experienced in the present. That is you express your strong desire to project through your willpower while you visualize yourself doing it.
8. The Monroe techniques - These are a series of steps developed by Robert Monroe: a) relax the body, b) enter the hypnogogic state, c) deepen the state, d) develop the sensation of 'vibration', e) separate from the body. The Monroe Institute has developed some cassette tapes which are claimed to help in this.
9. Dream control - This is one of the most important techniques. It involves becoming aware that you are dreaming. There are several ways to do this. Oliver Fox says to look for discrepancies in the dream to realize you are dreaming. One occult student I know of visualized a white horse which he could ride wherever he wished to go. After a time, when the horse appeared in his dreams it was his cue that he was actually dreaming/projecting. Don Juan tells Castaneda to look at his hands while he is dreaming. And even the tarot and Cabala may be used as dream signals. Another method is to tell yourself each night as you go to sleep, "I can fly"; then when you do, you will know you are dreaming. Once you know you are dreaming you can control your dream/OOBE and go anywhere you want. Repetitive activities will also likely influence your dreams. For example, if you are on an automobile trip and spend most of the day driving, you will probably dream about driving. You can condition yourself to be aware you are dreaming by doing a repetitive activity many times (walking across the room or a particular magick ritual, for example). Then when you dream about it, you will know you are dreaming.
10. Dream expansion- A variation on dream control. A dream may be *extended* by imagining it continuing from where it was when you awaken. Then it is just a simple step to 'astral project' by directing you 'dream'.

Although all these techniques may appear straightforward, they all require effort. Astral projection is generally learned.

The astral world is the "ghostland" into which one passes after death. It is sometimes possible to visit with the dead, or you might be called upon to reassure and assist those who have just passed over (died) or those who are consciously projecting for the first time. Many spirits, elementals and ghosts exist in the astral world. The magician should feel comfortable there. Tibetan belief is that through proficiency in OOBE, you no longer need reincarnate after death. The astral world is extremely changeable and subject to your thoughts. Your will can control your

movements in the astral world, and if you seem to be going somewhere non-volitionally ('astral current') it is probably your true will causing it anyway. You might also experience heightened magical ability while in the astral realm.

[This is a popular subject, and there may be other files online about it. Check the MIND file area for OOBE.ARC. This file includes the following articles -

MIAS.DOC.

MONROE.DOC.

OBEBOOK.AST

OOBE.THR.

TN.TXT.]

Review Questions

1. What is the relationship between astral projection and dreams.
2. What is mental projection?
3. List the ten basic methods of astral projection.

Book List

- H.P. Battersby, Man Outside Himself.
- Susan J. Blackmore, Beyond the Body.
- J.H. Brennan, Astral Doorways.
- Robert Crookall, The Techniques of Astral Projection.
- Denning and Phillips, The Llewellyn Practical Guide to Astral Projection.
- Oliver Fox, Astral Projection.
- Gavin & Yvonne Frost, Astral Travel.
- Celia Green, Out-of-the-body Experiences.
- Richard A. Greene, The Handbook of Astral Projection.
- Herbert Greenhouse, The Astral Journey.
- Jack London, Star Rover (historical occult novel).
- Janet Mitchell, Out of Body Experiences.
- Robert Monroe, Journeys Out of the Body.
- Robert E. Moser, Mental and Astral Projection.
- Muldoon and Carrington, The Projection of the Astral Body.
- Ophiel, The Art and Practice of Astral Projection.
- A.E. Powell, The Astral Body.
- D. Scott Rogo, Leaving the Body.
- J.M. Shay, Out of the Body Consciousness.
- Susy Smith, The Enigma of Out-of-the-body Travel.
- Brad Steiger, The Mind Travelers.
- Yram, Practical Astral Projection.

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